

Italy PM Says Told Merkel Decision Over German Captain Lies with Judges

MILAN - Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte said he had no decision power over the fate of the German sea captain who has been arrested for violating a docking ban, adding the matter lied with the country's magistrates.

German Chancellor Angela "Merkel asked me about the captain and I explained that in Italy executive power is separate from the judicial one ... the prime minister cannot step in. It's in the magistrates' hands," he told a press briefing in Brussels. Captain Carola Rackete, 31, who spent two weeks in international waters with dozens of rescued African migrants, was arrested on Saturday when her NGO



ship docked at the island port of Lampedusa without permission.

Magistrates in the Sicilian town of Agrigento are due to decide whether to release her after a hearing later on Monday. (Reuters)

Mexico Inaugurates Its New National Guard Force

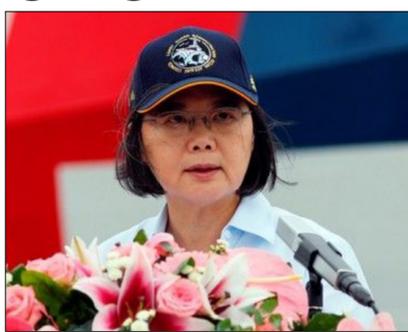
MEXICO CITY - President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador on Sunday formally inaugurated the National Guard, a militarized police force aimed at cracking down on the country's growing crime rate and securing its borders. Lopez Obrador said that the initial 70,000 members would be deployed to 150 regions across Mexico, and eventually 150,000 personnel will cover most of the country. The leftist president, who took office in December 2018, had long

criticized the use of soldiers in the crackdown on violent cartels. The National Guard however is made up mainly of former soldiers and has a military leadership. Critics say its personnel are not properly trained to handle civilian tasks. Although the force was formally inaugurated on Sunday, National Guard members have been deployed since May to hot spots across the country. In late June, under US pressure, more than 21,000 ... (More on P4)...(18)

Taiwan President to Visit U.S. This Month, Angering China

TAIPEI - Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen will spend four nights in the United States this month while visiting Caribbean diplomatic allies, her government said on Monday, angering China, which urged Washington not to allow her to visit. China says self-ruled Taiwan is merely a Chinese province with no right to state-to-state relations, calling it the most sensitive and important issue in ties with the United States, which has no formal ties with

Taipei, but is its chief diplomatic backer and supplier of arms. Taiwan's Deputy Foreign Minister Miguel Tsao said Tsai will spend two nights in the United States each way during her trip to St Vincent and the Grenadines, St Lucia, St Kitts and Nevis, and Haiti from July 11 to 22. Details of the U.S. portion of the trip were still being worked out, he added. Taiwan's Central News Agency said Tsai was expected to transit in



New York and Denver. In Beijing, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Geng Shuang said China urges the United States "not to allow Tsai Ing-wen to transit, and cautiously and appropriately handle Taiwan ... (More on P4)...(14)

Japan Restricts Exports to South Korea Over Wartime Labour Row



TOKYO - Japan on Monday imposed restrictions on exports used by South Korea's chip and smartphone compa-

nies, ramping up long-simmering tensions between the US allies over the use of forced labour during World War Two.

Seoul quickly hit back, saying the measures violated international law and threatening to raise the issue at the World Trade Organisation. The move raises the stakes in a protracted dispute over South Korean court rulings requiring Japanese firms to compensate victims of a wartime forced labour policy. The disagreement comes against the backdrop of decades of strained ties as the result of Japan's brutal 1910-45 colonial rule over the Korean

peninsula. The new measures take effect from July 4 and will significantly slow the export of several key materials used by South Korea's chip and smartphone giants. Japan said they were the result of a breakdown in trust with Seoul. "The export control system is built based on international relations of trust," Japan's Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) said. "After reviews by relevant ministries, it must be ... (More on P4)...(15)

Hong Kong Demonstrators Storm Government Building Amid Protests on Anniversary of Return of Chinese Rule

HONG KONG - A group of protestors smashed a window and stormed Hong Kong's legislature building Monday amid another round of massive demonstrations in the city on the 22nd anniversary of the return to Chinese rule. The crowd, comprised of mostly young protesters, could be seen on video using a cargo cart and large poles as battering rams against the glass panel. The demonstrators then tore down part of a glass and met-

al exterior wall of the government building, carrying away the long strips of metal framework. Officers were able to eventually commandeer the cart, using riot shields and deploying pepper spray to push back the hundreds of demonstrators gathered around the building. A crowd of nearly 100 protestors later surged into the building in a situation described as "chaos" as people ... (More on P4)...(19)

Paris Introduces Rent Controls to Cap Rises

PARIS - Paris authorities reintroduced rent controls on Monday in a bid to get a grip on the spiralling cost of living in the City of Light.

Real estate prices have surged in the French capital, mirroring spurts in other major European cities due to historic low interest rates, buoyant economic growth and the impact of holiday renting website Airbnb, experts say.

A previous attempt to cap rents in Paris between 2015-2017 was struck down in court on a technicality, but the city's mayor has returned with a new mechanism designed to help middle-class families.

A reference ... (More on P4)...(20)

Vatican Says Laws Cannot Force Priests to Break Seal of Confession

VATICAN CITY - The Vatican on Monday reaffirmed Catholic teaching that priests cannot reveal what they learn in confession, in an apparent response to moves in Australia and elsewhere to force them to do so in cases of sexual abuse.

A document from the Vatican's Apostolic Penitentiary, which deals with issues of the sacrament of confession, said no government or law could force clergy to violate the seal "because this duty comes directly from God."

The document, which did not mention any countries or the sexual abuse crisis, complained of a "worrying negative prejudice against the Catholic Church". Most countries' legal systems respect the religious right of a Catholic priest not to reveal what ... (More on P4)...(21)

Thousands Protest in Brazil in Support of Justice Minister

RIO DE JANEIRO - Thousands protested in Brazil on Sunday in support of Justice Minister Sergio Moro, who is battling claims he conspired with prosecutors on his anti-corruption drive to keep former leader Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva from another presidential run.

Moro, a powerful judge who joined President Jair Bolsonaro's cabinet in January, has faced calls for his resignation over leaked chats purportedly showing he worked with prosecutors in the so-called Car Wash probe to keep Lula, a popular leftist, out of the 2018 presidential race.



Demonstrators dressed in Brazil's national colors of yellow and green took to the streets in 88 cities including Rio de Janeiro, Sao Paulo and the capital Brasilia, news website G1 reported, in a show of support for Moro, whom many Brazilians fed up with corrupt leaders consider

a hero. The protesters also demanded Congress approve the government's ambitious overhaul of the bloated retirement system. Bolsonaro has warned it will bankrupt the country if changes are not adopted. Turnout, though, ... (More on P4)...(16)

UK's Johnson Says Impact of No-Deal Brexit Would Be Very, Very Small

LONDON - Boris Johnson, the favorite to become Britain's next prime minister, said on Monday the impact of leaving the European Union without a deal would be "very, very small", and added that he had a very carefully costed program of spending plans. "There is as you know about 26 billion quids (pounds) worth of headroom. The money is there," Johnson

told reporters when asked about his spending proposals. "We also think there is room to make some sensible tax cuts as well and we will be doing that too." The former foreign minister repeated his message that he did not think Britain would leave the European Union without agreement, but that there were many ways to mitigate the effect ... (More on P4)...(17)

Britain's FTSE 350 Firms Urged to Appoint More Women Leaders

LONDON - Britain's top companies were urged on Monday to keep up the pace to meet a target for women to hold 33 percent of senior leadership positions by 2020.

Currently 32.1 percent of FTSE 100 board positions are held by women, up from 12.5 percent in 2011. Meanwhile, in the FTSE 250, figures have jumped from 24.9 percent to 27.5 percent, the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy said in a press release.

Business Minister Kelly Tolhurst said that "These latest figures show there are now more women than ever before at the top of UK business ... Diversity makes good business sense and those who fail to see this as a priority are missing out on the benefits that diverse leadership brings." A British government-backed independent review, launched in 2016, set FTSE 350 businesses a target of having a third of all board and senior leadership positions held by women by the end of 2020. Figures show that if progress matches the same gains made over the last three years, then FTSE 100 companies are on track to meet the 2020 target. Fourteen companies in the FTSE 350 were also named Monday in a new initiative to highlight those with one woman or less on their boards -- a sign showing there is still more work to do. (Xinhua)

Neighbor News

Foreign Minister: Iran's Enriched Uranium Stocks Exceed 300kg

TEHRAN - Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif says the country has increased the level of its low-enriched uranium production to over 300 kilograms as had been already announced by the country in line with Articles 26 and 36 of a 2015 nuclear deal with world powers, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

Zarif made the remarks on Monday while answering a question by Iran's ISNA news agency on the sidelines of a ceremony in the central Iranian city of Natanz. "According to my information, Iran has surpassed the 300kg limit [in producing low-enriched uranium] and we had already announced [that we were planning to do] this," Iran's top diplomat said.

He added, "According to what has been announced, we have said very clearly what we are doing and consider

this as part of our rights as per the JCPOA."

IAEA: Inspectors checking Iran's enriched uranium stock Following the revelation on Monday, Reuters quoted a spokesman for the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) as saying that the agency's inspectors are verifying whether Iran has accumulated more enriched uranium than allowed under the JCPOA.

"We are aware of the media reports related to Iran's stockpile of low-enriched uranium (LEU)," the unnamed spokesman said, adding, "Our inspectors are on the ground and they will report to headquarters as soon as the LEU stockpile has been verified." On July 17, the spokesman for the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran said the Islamic will surpass the uranium stockpile limit set under the nuclear deal from June 27. (Press TV)

President Urges Mountaineers to Practice, Promote Environment-Friendly Tourism

HUNZA - President Dr Arif Alvi Monday urged the mountaineers to practice and promote the environment-friendly tourism in the high altitude areas while showing concerns over the recent visuals showing litter at the base camp of K-2 peak.

Addressing the concluding ceremony of

the second edition of Tour de Khunjab 2019 - an international cycle race here, the president appreciated the Government of Gilgit-Baltistan for launching the campaign to make Hunza a plastic free district which was the first of its kind initiative in the whole country. (Monitoring Desk)

Turkish Business Circles Ready to Intensify Co-Op with Turkmenistan

ASHGABAT - Turkmen President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov has received the heads of the Turkish Nata and Ronesans holdings, Trend reports referring to Turkmenistan TV channel.

Chairman of the board of directors of Nata Holding Namik Tanik confirmed the desire of the company to build mutually beneficial business ties with the country.

Specific spheres of activity of the Turkish company for the implementation of development programs of such sectors of the Turkmen economy as construction, transport and communications were discussed.

This company has proved itself as a partner carrying out important work in the field of construction of roads, bridges and railway infrastructure facilities, which is the most dy-

namically developing segment of the country's transport complex, Turkmen Dowllet Habarary (TDH) state agency said.

Chairman of the Board of Ronesans Holding Erman Ilicak also stressed the desire of the Turkish business circles to increase productive cooperation with Turkmenistan.

Turkmenistan attracts foreign partners not only with its great potential in the energy sector. The Turkmen national economy focuses on the creation of new, high-tech production facilities, which opens up the opportunities for expanding technological cooperation.

Ronesans Holding has participated in the implementation of a large-scale project - the construction of a plant for the production of gasoline from natural gas in Ahal province. (Trend)

Uzbek Central Bank: Growth of Dollar, Euro to Soum Is Stable

TASHKENT - The Central Bank of Uzbekistan has published exchange rates that will be effective from July 2, Trend reports with reference to the Central Bank of Uzbekistan.

Central Bank notes that the dollar is 8,574.74 soums, and the euro - 9,747.76.

Unlike the US currency, which shows regular, but gradual growth (+26.60 last week and +14.40 this week), the euro behaves unstably. Last week, the European currency jumped by 165.96, although it

had previously shown a sharp decline. This week, the euro is growing steadily to the soum (+15.80).

After the currency reform in 2017, the Central Bank managed to stabilize its position in the market, but the sum gradually lost its position against world currencies.

However, changes in the course are also seasonal, so after considerable fluctuations and growth in certain periods, it is quite possible to strengthen the soum. (Trend)